

Henry Petrikin to Andrew Jackson, April 2, 1830, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

H. PETRIKIN TO JACKSON.

Harrisburg, Pa., April 2, 1830.

Dear Sir, I am an obscure individual, scarcely known beyond, (if known at all) the limits of the State. To you I am totally a stranger. But I have presumed to address you on a subject which is of more interest to the people than to yourself. You are "public property", and I claim the right to be heard on the part of those who are their country's friends, and whose patriotism is not measured by a thirst for office. I will (and hope not to incur the charge of vanity in stating it) say to you, in evidence of standing in my native State, that I have represented the County I come from (Centre) in the Senate, and am now a member of the House of Representatives, and have been for sometime past. A few evenings since a meeting of the Democratic members of the Legislature, friendly to the National Administration, was called. I attended, and was appointed one of the Secretaries of the meeting. A committee was appointed to draft resolutions for the consideration of the meeting. The 2nd resolution reported was in these words:

Resolved, *That, "should it (The Administration) continue to be characterised by the same wholesome measures and sound republican principles with which it has commenced"*, the best interests of the country will be maintained and promoted by the re-election of the present distinguished Chief of Magistrate.

On motion of Mr Cunningham, of Mercer, that part which is underscored underwent debate whether it should be struck out. The striking out was warmly opposed by Dr. Burden and

Library of Congress

all the friends of Samuel D. Ingham. I supported the motion to “strike out”, as did Wise, of Westmoreland, Wilkins, of Allegheny, Cunningham of Mercer and some others. The question was, whether a resolution so doubtful in its phraseology; so luke warm in its expression of adherence to the “People's Choice”, so evidently open to doubt whether it was a sincere expression of our sentiments, should be adopted; or whether one more bold, more decided, without *if* or *and*, should be substituted. It was evident that the friends of Ingham wished to hold themselves in reserve, and unpledged, to be governed by circumstances. If by their intrigue, for which in this State they are famous, and in which consists all their power, for they are few in number, they could manage to get you out of the way, then their whole energies would be put in requisition in support of John C. Calhoun. They dare not openly declare themselves against you. They are aware that the people would frown them down. But they are at work to destroy you in the affections of the people in a covert way. I assure you on the word of one who never asked you for an Office and never will, that their task is a vain one. The people demand it at your hands to be again a candidate, and the result of the meeting of the *members*, called by the few adherents of Ingham and Sutherland in the Legislature, to answer their own selfish views and base purposes, should operate powerfully with you to suffer yourself to be again a candidate. The resolution above quoted was voted down, and you will see by the public papers the opinion of the meeting in the preamble and resolutions adopted. The honest yeomanry of the country are well represented in the sentiments therein contained.

But your sincere friends—those who never asked you for an Office, are surprized that you retain in your Cabinet a Man who is plotting, (not only your destruction, but) against the peace and welfare and best interests of the Country. You are loudly called upon, and justice to your friends in this State, requires it at your hands, to dismiss from your confidence and partonage, Samuel D Ingham and the creatures attached to his fortunes, who through his exertions were appointed to Office in this State. He and they came into your support at a late hour, and only when they found that a vast Majority of the people were against their favorite, Calhoun. They never were your sincere friends; and although

Library of Congress

for the little service they performed, they were well rewarded with Office, they are uneasy and will never be satisfied until their ends are accomplished in the promotion of their favorite. They have attempted to make you believe that they were the *pillars* upon which your popularity in Pennsylvania rested, and to ingratiate themselves more readily, Baldwin and Barnard¹ must be destroyed and weakened in your estimation. That was a part of their plans. Those two men were your zealous, efficient and sincere supporters from the first, and remain as much attached and as sincerely devoted to you as ever. I am intimate with them both, and assure I speak to you the truth and nothing but the truth in pledging to you their sincerity and devotedness at all times and now. . . .

¹ Isaac D. Barnard, senator from Pennsylvania. Henry Baldwin, of the same state, was a prominent Jackson man, and was made an associate justice of the U. S. Supreme Court by Jackson. A letter from Ross Wilkins to Senator Barnard, Apr. 3, 1830 (Jackson MSS.), is in the same tenor as this letter from Petrikin.